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MARTIN AGRONSKY: Shocking observation, Carl. You say that some of the people who are against the way the Poles are chipping away at freedoms in Poland are chipping away at freedoms in our country.

CARL ROWAN: Yes. Not in the same disastrous way. But we have seen in this year an unleashing of the CIA into domestic spying, which I think is something you had better watch. We have the Attorney General of the United States demanding that federal judges bend to what he calls the conservative tide. You have got a situation where they are trying to wipe out, in all effects, the Freedom of Information Act.

The way you keep your freedom is to stop these little pieces of action before they become a mosaic.

AGRONSKY: Before George blows up into 15 little pieces, you'd better let him respond.

Go ahead.

GEORGE WILL: Not since Chicken Little has there been such a preposterous analysis of the world.

Look, the Attorney General said that, in fact, courts ought to recur to the constitutional limits of their branch of government a little more often. If that threatens you, my goodness.

The CIA has not been a rogue elephant. We can live with the CIA. We can't live with some of the so-called regulators.

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AGRONSKY: Carl isn't saying that it has been. He doesn't want it to become.

ROWAN: Well, at one point it was a rogue elephant, and they know it. And it almost destroyed the CIA. And I still believe...

HUGH SIDEY: I don't know it. I don't believe it.

ROWAN: ...that the FBI and other agencies with a mandate to operate in this country are doing well enough. We don't need the CIA spying on Americans in America.

MEL ELFIN: That's not the issue. The issue here is whether the people who are speaking about -- speaking out against the repression in Poland are the very same people who are repressing people's rights in this country. Are you including Lane Kirkland and Arthur Goldberg? Are these the people you're talking about?

ROWAN: Now hold on. I didn't say everybody speaking out against it in Poland. I'm speaking out against it in Poland, and I'm not out there to repress anybody's freedom. But a lot of Americans are.

WILL: Who is? Who is? Name one.

ROWAN: Whoever tells me that the CIA spies on Americans or says it's the job of the Attorney General to go scold judges and tell them they've got to bend to a conservative tide. This is not American, to use one of your good old phrases.

SIDEY: Carl, you're only talking about half the equation. Think of all the freedom you've gotten through the deregulation process that Reagan has started, the budget cuts, the tax relief, all of those elements that...

[Confusion of voices]

ROWAN: Now you want me to cry for Christmas. Is that it?

ELFIN: I just -- there is a certain measure of change in this country. But to say that the CIA has been unleashed on domestic spying I think is a little rhetorical exaggeration in this season.

ROWAN: I hope it is.

WILL: Carl, what we have is the CIA under a charter. We have congressional...

ROWAN: Under what charter, George?

WILL: Well, under the one the President signed. It's not a statutory charter, but some things shouldn't be statutory.

You have oversight committees of Congress. Are you saying that the oversight committees of Congress are so lax in worrying about Rowan's rights that you're in jeopardy?

ROWAN: No. I'm saying that many members of the oversight committees of the Congress are worried about this. They did not want what was first proposed. They aren't really happy with this. But they couldn't stop the President from signing that executive order.

AGRONSKY: May I stand with Carl on this to some extent. From the beginning, when it was first proposed that we should have, indeed, what amounts now to the CIA, there was a great concern, even among conservatives in this country and on the Republican side of the aisle in both houses, that this CIA should not be in a position to undertake domestic espionage. And this new charter that is now proposed for the CIA does indeed grant that permission. And I think that is a trespass upon our freedoms and presents a threat to our freedoms. I would certainly agree with Carl on that.

SIDEY: It's considerably circumscribed.

AGRONSKY: Not adequately, in my opinion.

SIDEY: Well, that's debatable.

But, Martin, I submit this to you. On the one hand, we want to contain the CIA or to restrain it more in this country; and on the other hand, we are demanding more of the CIA than ever before. We want them more involved. We want more information about what's going to happen in Poland.

AGRONSKY: We don't want it here. We want to know what's happening in Poland.

ELFIN: But the question of freedom for the average American, how it affects his life, is more -- his freedom is more constrained by the threat of crime, in street crime, in getting mugged and raped and attacked in the streets of the United States, and burglarized, than it is by anything right now that the CIA is proposing...

ROWAN: Yes. But, Mel, you see, that does not make it right. The average person may think that, but I'll guaranty you that the average Pole today will tell you that government oppression and suppression override any of those fears that

normally come to people's minds. And the only way you prevent government oppression and suppression is to knock on the government the moment it reaches out, the first time...

SIDEY: Are you suggesting this government is more oppressive than the one...

ROWAN: Which government?

SIDEY: Reagan's government.

ROWAN: Oh, I'm not comparing government-by-government. All I'm talking about is that this is the first government to say, "Let the CI[A] spy in the United States."

WILL: On my list of 100 things that Americans should fear in 1982, the 99th would be getting hit by the Goodyear blimp and the 98th would be college presidents and the 97th would be the CIA.

ROWAN: Well, George, that may be because you don't think they're coming after you.

WILL: I don't.

SIDEY: I hope not.

AGRONSKY: Well that's the last word.